(b) whether it is also a fact that the lowest bidder for this contract is Mazagon Docks Limited (MDL);

(c) whether efforts are afoot to give the contract to NPCC of Abu Dhabi on the ground that MDL is not in a position to offer a financial package;

(d) whether Government would ensure that MDL is not starved of funds and not made to lose contracts; and

(e) whether the ONGC itself would finance the same?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (CAPTAIN SATISH SHARMA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) to (e) The tender was discussed in the Steering Committee meeting of the ONGC. The Steering Committee decided to seek best reduced prices (inclusive of customs duty and excise duty) from all the technically acceptable bidders. ONGC would also inform the bidders that they are not looking for any financing package/ credit facility in this project.

Sitting up of two petroleum refineries in North India

8041. SHRI SURESH KALMADI: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government propose to set up two grass-root petroleum refineries in North India;

(b) if so, what is the estimated cost of each refinery; and

(c) what is the capacity of production of each refinery?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (CAPTAIN SATISH SHARMA): (a) to (c) Government has already approved the setting up of a 6 MMTPA capacity refinery at Panipat by Indian Oil Corporation Limited at an estimated cost of Rs. 3868 crores. There is also a proposal to set up a grass-root refinery in Uttar Pradesh. The details of the proposal are being worked out.

Purchase of Gas Stoves with New LPG Connections

8042. SHRIMATI MALTI SHARMA: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is mandatory to produce a receipt of having bought a gas stove, to get a new gas connections;

(b) if so, whether this condition is clearly stated in the allotment letters issued for gas connections;

(c) if not, the reasons therefor;

(d) whether some agencies, including M/s. Nihar Gas Service, Bharat Gas Distributors, 149, Pocket-D, Mayur Vihar, Phase-II, Delhi-91, are pressurising consumers by harassing them, to buy gas stoves from them at higher prices, than those prevailing in the open market; and

(e) if so, what steps Government propose to take in the matter?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (CAPTAIN SATISH SHARMA): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) Do not arise

(d) and (e) Sometimes such complaints are received. The customers are at liberty to purchase hot-plate from any source provided it bears the ISI mark. The distributors have standing instructions not to insist on purchase of hot-plate from them and are required to display a notice in their showrooms that it is not obligatory for a customer to purchase hot-plate from the distributors releasing the connection. The Marketing

Discipline Guidelines, inter-alia, provide for penal action against those distributors who indulge in such malpractices. Oil Companies take necessary action immediately on receipt of such complaints. Bharat Petroleum Corporation has reported that no such complaint has been received against M/s. Nihal Gas Service by them.

Demand of Natural Gas

8043. SHRI SURESH PACHOURI: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have made any assessment of the demand for Natural Gas by the end of this century;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the strategy adopted by Government to enable the oil sector to meet this demand for Natural Gas by the turn of this century?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (CAPTAIN SATISH SHARMA): (a) and (b) An Expert Group constituted by the Government has projected a demand of 146.56 MMSCMD in 1999-2000 A.D.

(c) Steps taken to increase the supply of natural gas include the additional development of existing fields, development of new fields etc. The Government is also examining the feasibility of importing natural gas.

Auctioning of oilfields

8044. SHRI VIRENDRA KATARIA: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to auction small oilfields discovered by Public Sector Undertakings like Oil and Natural Gas Corporation Limited and Oil India Limited; and

(b) if so, what are the details of the proposal, including the number of fields proposed to be auctioned?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (CAPT. SATISH SHARMA): (a) and (b) Under the first and second offer for development of fields, 31 and 33 small sized fields respectively were offered to Indian and foreign companies for development. These fields would be developed by the companies on their own with no participation by ONGC/OIL, under production contracts with Govt. of India. The companies would have to pay statutory levies like royalty and cess. Payment for the companies share of oil would be at international prices.

Rules for opening up second gas agency

8045. SHRI J. S. RAJU:

-SHRI MISA R. GANESAN:

Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) what norms are followed for getting a second gas agency if the population of a place is more than 20,000; and

(b) whether the gas agency is given at Panchayat level, since the Panchayat Raj is put on a high pedestal for local administration?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (CAPT. SATISH SHARMA): (a) A second LPG distributorship in a market is set up based on either or both of the following considerations:

1. If the waiting list of the existing distributor is large enough to sustain an independent economically viable second distributorship.